

Network Rail and Forestry and Land Scotland Complete £300k Biodiversity Project

August 27, 2024



Network Rail and Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) have successfully completed a two-year biodiversity enhancement project near the iconic Glenfinnan viaduct. The project, valued at £300k, aimed to protect and restore the natural habitats in the area.

The initiative focused on planting trees across approximately 200 hectares to expand and restore rainforest and peatland habitats. Deer fencing was also installed to safeguard the newly planted woodlands from overgrazing.

Located within Scotland's endangered Atlantic rainforest zone, this project is a significant contribution to biodiversity conservation.

Liam Sumpter, managing director, Network Rail Scotland, said: "We're delighted to have worked with FLS to protect and enhance Scotland's unique natural environment.

"To date, this has been the most ambitious biodiversity enhancement project undertaken by Network Rail in Scotland.

"This project has enabled us to balance the removal of trees and vegetation elsewhere on the railway on a scale that would not be possible by replanting purely within our own boundaries. The long-term result of this activity is expected to be an uplift in biodiversity across the project area.

"Rail is already one of the greenest forms of transport and we are working to reduce our industry's impact on the environment through further electrification of our network and also by supporting innovative

projects like this one.”

Kevin Quinlan , Chief Executive of FLS, said: “Part of the dramatic setting of the Glenfinnan viaduct, this area holds several environmental and landscape designations and contains habitats of national and international importance.

“We have been exploring corporate partnerships for a while and our work with Network Rail at this site is a very good example of what can be achieved with this collaborative approach.

“Through this project we have been able to channel funding into a high priority biodiversity area and tap into the shared resources of our joint contractor bases to overcome operational challenges. The outcome is much improved habitats for biodiversity to thrive and for visitors to enjoy in this iconic glen.”

The project’s success is expected to have a long-term positive impact on the biodiversity of the Glenfinnan area, benefiting both wildlife and visitors to this iconic location.